

LENTICULAR LABEL MANUFACTURE

BACKGROUND

This application is continuation-in-part of U.S. Application 10/237,318, filed
5 September 9, 2002 (now pending), which is a divisional application of U.S. Application 09/800,
868, filed March 7, 2001 (now U.S. Patent 6,596,361).

The present invention relates to labels and more particularly to the manufacture of
labels including lenticular lenses.

Lenticular lenses are known and used in the printing of advertising and
10 promotional materials, packaging labels, hang tags for merchandise, product tags, and security
labels. Lenticular lenses are thin, transparent lenses that are flat on one side and include a
plurality of parallel, linear, side-by-side lenticules--elongate, convex lenses--on a second side.
Typically, an image is printed on the flat side to create a visual effect of zoom-in, zoom-out,
stereoscopic, three-dimensional sequencing, or movement of the image when viewed through the
15 lenticules. The combination of a lens and an image is referred to as a lenticular assembly.

Lenticular assemblies are manufactured in a continuous web with the lenticules
being parallel to the longitudinal axis of the continuous web. In one manufacturing process,
concave machine guides fit over the convex lenticules as the web advances to ensure exact
registration between images printed on the flat side and the lenticules.

20 In a popular application, the web of lenticular assemblies is applied to a web of
transfer tape on a release liner or carrier web. The adhered lenticular assemblies and tape are die
cut to create a continuous web of pressure sensitive lenticular labels. The resultant product is a
continuous web of lenticular labels having the lenticules oriented parallel to one another and the
length or the longitudinal axis of the web.

The resulting web of lenticular labels suffers a number of shortcomings. Most significantly, the orientation of the lenticules extending the length of the label web governs the orientation of the desired visual effect. Specifically, as a result of the lenticules' orientation, the intended visual effect on the continuous label web may be viewed in only two ways; (1) by
5 rotating the continuous web along an axis parallel to the length of the web, and (2) by moving the web so that a viewer's sight line moves across the width of the web, that is, perpendicular to the length of the web.

When labels are applied from the resulting web to objects, such as bottles, using conventional labeling equipment, the lenticules are oriented circumferentially on the object (i.e.
10 perpendicular to the height of the object). Consequently, the visual effect occurs only when the viewer and the labeled object move vertically relative to one another. Because continuous lenticular assemblies are available only with lenticules parallel to the direction of travel, the conditions under which the visual effects occur have been limited.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

15 The aforementioned problems are overcome in the present invention wherein the lenticules of lenticular labels on a continuous web are oriented transversely to the longitudinal axis of the web.

In one embodiment, a process of manufacturing the web includes: providing a continuous web of label stock; joining a plurality of lenticular assemblies with the continuous
20 web, the lenticules of the lenticular assemblies transverse to the length of the continuous web; and optionally die-cutting the lenticular assembly/label stock to form individual labels.

In another embodiment, a process of manufacturing the web includes: providing a continuous web of label stock that defines or includes a window, joining lenticular assemblies

with the continuous web with the lenticles of the lenticular assemblies transverse to the length of the continuous web and the lenticular assemblies at least partially visible through the window; and optionally die-cutting the lenticular assembly/label stock to form individual labels.

5 When the lenticular labels are applied with conventional continuous labeling equipment to a vertically standing article, for example, a bottle, the desired visual effect is perceived by a viewer either (1) as the article is rotated about its longitudinal axis or (2) as the viewer walks past the vertically standing article.

These and other objects, advantages and features of the invention will be more readily understood and appreciated by reference to the detailed description of the preferred
10 embodiments and the drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of the continuous lenticular label web manufacturing process of the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a perspective view of the continuous lenticular label web manufacturing
15 process with individual lenticular labels being formed;

Fig. 3 is a perspective view of individual lenticular labels being applied from a web onto articles;

Fig. 4 is a top plan view of individual lenticular labels being applied from a web onto articles;

20 Fig. 5 is perspective view of a viewer perceiving a lenticular label manufactured according to the process of the present invention and applied;

Fig. 6 is a perspective view of a first alternative construction of a lenticular assembly of the continuous lenticular label web;

Fig. 7 is a perspective view of a second alternative construction of a lenticular assembly of the continuous lenticular label web;

Fig. 8 is a perspective view of the continuous lenticular label web manufacturing process with lenticular labels of the second alternative construction being formed; and

5 Fig. 9 is a perspective view of individual lenticular labels of the second alternative construction being applied from a web onto articles.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

In the preferred embodiment, the present invention is described in connection with the manufacture of a continuous lenticular label web and the application of individual labels
10 to articles. With reference to Figs. 1 and 2, the lenticular label web 10 of the preferred embodiment is constructed from sheets of lenticular assemblies 20 secured to a label assembly 50, which is in the form of a continuous web.

The lenticular assembly 20 includes a lenticular lens 24 associated with a visual effect image 22 to provide an illusion. As desired, a plurality of images 22 may be associated in
15 any configuration on the lenticular assembly 20. The visual effect image 22 may include any combination of graphics, text, or other visual information. As used herein, "visual effect image" means an image that creates illusions such as "flips", "3-D" or stereographic, full motion video, "morphing", and/or zooming. A "flip" represents an abrupt change from one viewed image to another, different image "3-D" effects produce an illusion of depth for an object being viewed.
20 Full motion video produces a sense of movement of an object being viewed as the viewing angle changes. "Morphing" produces an illusion of a metamorphosis (transition) from one image to another as the viewing angle changes. Zooming presents a size change in an object being viewed, the object appearing to move either closer to, or away from, the viewer.

The lenticular assembly 20 may be of various constructions, including the preferred construction depicted in Fig. 1, where lenticular lens 24 has an image printed on the flat side 26, opposite the lenticules 28. The image may be printed on the flat side 26 using conventional lenticular lens printing methods, which precisely register the images 22 with the lenticules 28 to ensure the image is viewed through the lenticular lens with the intended visual effect.

In the preferred embodiment, depicted in Figs. 1 and 2, the lenticular assemblies 20 are provided in sheet form. The lenticular assemblies 20 are secured to the continuous web of label assemblies 50 so that the direction L in which the lenticules extend in parallel is offset some angle A from the direction W coincident with the length of the continuous web, also known as the direction/line of advancement, or the direction/line of travel of the web. Optionally, the lenticules of adjacent lenticular assemblies are also aligned substantially parallel to one another. The lenticular assemblies 20 may be secured to the continuous web of label assemblies 50 with any suitable adhesive, but preferably with permanent adhesive 52.

The label assembly 50 is preferably in continuous web form. As shown in Figs. 1-3, label assembly 50 includes label stock web 56, which may be constructed of any suitable material or combination of materials including, but not limited to paper, plastic, or metal foil. On a first side of the stock 56, an adhesive 52 is disposed to secure sheets of lenticular assemblies 20 to the label assembly 50. The adhesive is a conventional permanent adhesive, but other adhesives may be used as the application requires. On the opposite side of the stock 56, a second adhesive 58 is disposed. This adhesive 58 is preferably a pressure sensitive adhesive, but also may be any conventional adhesive as the application requires.

Adhesive 58 secures stock 56, and ultimately the web of label assembly material 50 to liner 60, which is preferably a silicone coated release liner, but may be any suitable carrier liner.

In a first alternative embodiment, shown in Fig. 6, the lenticular assembly 120 includes a lenticular lens 124 secured with a conventional adhesive 129 to lenticular stock 130 on the flat side 126 of the lenticular lens 124, opposite the lenticules. The lenticular stock 130 has an image 122 printed thereon that is aligned with the lenticules 128 to provide a viewing effect. The lenticular stock 130 may be constructed of any material or combination of materials including, but not limited to paper, plastic, or metal foil. The lenticular assemblies 120 as shown are secured to the continuous web 50 so that the direction L in which the lenticules extend substantially in parallel is offset some angle A from the direction W, which is coincident with the length of the continuous web, also known as the direction/line of advancement, or the direction/line of travel of the web. Optionally, the lenticules of adjacent lenticular assemblies are also aligned substantially parallel to one another.

In a second alternative embodiment, shown in Fig. 7, the lenticular assemblies 220 are secured to a continuous web 250. The continuous web 250 is constructed of stock 256, which includes on at least one side an adhesive 258. A window 282 is defined in the stock 256, and extends from the top of the stock to the bottom of the stock. This window enables a viewer to view the lenticular assembly 220 through the stock. In an alternative construction, the stock 256 includes a transparent and/or semi-transparent window 280. This window 280 may be constructed by including print in the region surrounding the window, or constructing the stock so that the material in the region of the window is transparent and/or semi-transparent, and the material in the region around the window is not transparent and/or semi-transparent. As desired,

however, the entire stock 250 may be transparent and/or semi-transparent. Moreover, either or both types of windows 280 and 282 may be used in a continuous web 250 as desired.

The lenticular assemblies 220 shown in Fig. 7 may be of any of the types described above, for example, a lenticular assembly including a lenticular lens 224 and an image 222 printed on the reverse side, or an assembly including a lenticular lens 224, lenticular stock 230 with an image 222 printed thereon, and an adhesive 229 that secures the stock to the lens 224 in an aligned manner. The images 222 of the assemblies may extend to the edges of the lenticular lens, or may terminate short of the edges to provide a margin 225 around all or a part of the image. Optionally, the margin 225 may include print, and may be adhered to the label stock 250. In this optional construction, a portion of the print in the margin may be concealed. Other conventional lenticular assemblies may be substituted as desired.

The dimensions of the lenticular assemblies may be selected so that the desired portion and/or all of the images 222 are viewable through the window 280 or 282, depending on the construction. For example, the assemblies may extend across the entire width of the stock 256, or be shorter or longer than that width as desired.

The lenticular assemblies of the construction shown in Fig. 7 are secured to the continuous web with an adhesive 258. When secured, the direction L in which the lenticules 228 extend in parallel is offset some angle A from the direction W, which is coincident with the length of the continuous web, also known as the direction/line of advancement, or the direction/line of travel of the web. Optionally, the lenticules of adjacent lenticular assemblies are also aligned substantially parallel to one another.

Method of Manufacture

With reference to Figs. 1-4, there will now be described the preferred process of the present invention of manufacturing a continuous lenticular label web. Individual labels from the continuous web manufactured by the preferred process are preferably applied using conventional labeling equipment to vertically standing articles.

The preferred process generally includes the steps: providing multiple lenticular assemblies; providing a continuous web of label stock and joining the lenticular assemblies to the continuous web so that lenticules of the lenticular assemblies extend in a direction that is offset a pre-selected angle from a direction coincident with the length of the continuous web.

As depicted in Figs. 1 and 2, the lenticular assemblies 20 are provided in sheet form. With conventional equipment, the sheets are positioned on the permanent adhesive 52 to secure the sheets of the lenticular assemblies 20 to the label assembly web 50. When the sheets are adhered to the web 50, the lenticules 28 of the sheets of lenticular assemblies 20 extend in direction L which is non-coincident with and at some angle A from direction W. Angle A is between about 0 and 180 degrees, preferably, between about 45 and 135 degrees, more preferably, about 80 to about 110 degrees, and most preferably, about 90 degrees. At about 90 degrees (depicted in Figs. 1 and 2), the direction in which the lenticules extend L is substantially perpendicular to direction W. The sheets of the lenticular assemblies 20, depicted in the figures as rectangular, may be of any shape or size and may include any number of visual effect images to form individual lenticular labels.

When the sheets of lenticular assemblies 20 are successfully adhered to the label assembly web 50, the resultant combination is a lenticular label assembly web 70. The web 70 is advanced to a conventional cutting station 75 where individual lenticular labels 80 are cut. The

cutting station may implement any conventional cutting method to cut the web, such as roller die-cut (as shown) or laser cut methods. The web may also be cut into labels in any conventional manner, for example by butt-cutting the labels, where no skeleton waste from excess material is created, or by skeleton cutting the labels, where such waste is created. If skeleton cutting methods are used, the waste matrix 84 generated may be removed from the web 70 and rolled on collector 92, as shown in Fig. 2.

The individual lenticular labels 80 created remain on the release liner 60. The lenticules 28 of the individual labels 80 remain oriented and extending in the same direction L as when the lenticular assemblies were first positioned on the label assembly web. Accordingly, in the preferred process, all the labels 80 on the web have lenticules extending in direction L, which is about perpendicular to direction W.

Additionally, the lenticular label web may be cut into sub-webs 72 that include single rows of lenticular labels 80 on the release liner 60. This is so the labels from the sub-webs 72 can easily be applied on individual articles one at a time. The sub-web cutting may be performed in any conventional manner. As depicted in Fig. 2, roller die-cutter 98 cuts the sub-webs 72.

In another step, the individual labels 80 are applied to articles 100 using the conventional continuous labeling equipment as depicted in Figs. 3 and 4. As depicted, the lenticular label sub-web 72 includes only one row of labels 80. The labels 80 are positioned at application station 94 immediately adjacent the article, here depicted as a cylindrical container 100. Without rotating the label 80 to change the lenticule orientation L, the article 100 is rotated adjacent the label 80 with belts 95 and 97 and plate 93 as depicted. The label 80, is peeled off the sub-web 72 with peel knife 91. By way of the pressure sensitive adhesive thereon, the label

80 catches and adheres onto and around the article 100. As the article rotates, the label 80 is peeled off liner 60 and wraps onto the article 100. The liner 60 is guided away from the application station 94 and collected by liner guide 96. The labeled article 101 is conveyed away from the application station 94 by conveyor 97 and another article is labeled.

5 With reference to Figs. 3 and 5, the label 80 applied to the article 100 according to the preferred process is consequently oriented so the lenticules extend in parallel in direction L, which is substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis C of the cylindrical article 101. As depicted in Fig. 5, with the orientation of the lenticules L parallel with the longitudinal axis C, the intended visual effect image is viewable by a viewer V when the article 101 is rotationally
10 translated or horizontally translated. Rotationally translated means rotated about the longitudinal axis C of the article 101 in direction R as shown in Fig 5. Translated horizontally means moved across the viewer's line of sight S in direction H as depicted in Fig 5. Of course, horizontal translation may occur when the article 101 itself is moved by a viewer, or when a viewer walks past an article, for example, when a viewer walks past an article displayed on a shelf.

15 The first alternative lenticular label construction shown in Fig. 6 may be manufactured and used in a manner similar to that described above.

 The second alternative label construction, shown in Fig. 7, also may be manufactured and used in manner similar to that above with minor modifications. More specifically, the process for manufacturing the second alternative construction generally
20 includes: providing a continuous web of label stock that defines or includes a window, joining lenticular assemblies on the continuous web with the lenticules of the lenticular assemblies transverse to the length of the continuous web and the lenticular assemblies at least partially

visible through the window; and optionally die-cutting the lenticular assembly/label stock to form individual labels.

As shown in Figs. 7-9, the lenticular assemblies 220 are provided in strips or sheets 290. These sheets, shown in broken lines in Fig. 8, are secured to the stock 256. Each individual assembly 220 included in the sheets 290 is aligned with windows 282 so that the assembly, and any image, in whole or in part, on the assembly is viewable through the window. The release liner 260 is secured to the stock 256 to create a resultant lenticular label assembly web 270. Once constructed, the lenticules 228 of the sheets 290 of lenticular assemblies 220 extend in direction L which is non-coincident with and at some angle A from direction W. Angle A may be any angle discussed above in connection with the first embodiment.

In another step, the web 270 advances to the cutting station 275 where individual lenticular labels 280 are cut according to the methods described above in connection with the first embodiment. After cutting, the individual lenticular labels 280, each including its own lenticular assembly 220, remain on the release liner 260, with the lenticules 228 of the individual labels 280 oriented and extending in direction L, which is about perpendicular to direction W. The lenticular label web 270 then may be cut into sub-webs 272 in a conventional manner to include single rows of lenticular labels 280 on the release liner 260.

In another step, the individual labels 280 of the second alternative embodiment are applied to articles 200 from the sub-web 272 using the continuous labeling equipment shown in Fig. 9. Specifically, the labels 280 are positioned adjacent the article 200 (shown as a cylindrical container bottle) the article 200 is rotated, and the label 280 is peeled-off the sub-web 272 with peel knife 291. By way of the pressure sensitive adhesive thereon, the label 280 catches and adheres onto and around the article 200. As the article rotates, the label 280 wraps

onto the article 200. The liner 260 is guided away from the container and collected by liner guide 296. The labeled article 201 is conveyed by conveyor 97 and another article is labeled.

5 With further reference to Fig. 9, the label 280 applied to the article 201 is oriented so the lenticules extend in parallel in direction L, which is substantially parallel with the longitudinal axis C of the cylindrical article 201. This orientation creates the same viewing effect as described above and shown in Fig. 5.

The above descriptions are those of the preferred embodiments of the invention. Various alterations and changes can be made without departing from the spirit and broader aspects of the invention as defined in the appended claims, which are to be interpreted in
10 accordance with the principles of patent law including the doctrine of equivalents. Any references to claim elements in the singular, for example, using the articles “a,” “an,” “the,” or “said,” is not to be construed as limiting the element to the singular.